



## Bridgewater State University Virtual Commons - Bridgewater State University

---

Archives & Special Collections Finding Aids

Special Collections & Archives

---

2014

# Guide to the May Sarton Collection, 1965-1997

Orson Kingsley

*Bridgewater State University*, [orson.kingsley@bridgew.edu](mailto:orson.kingsley@bridgew.edu)

---

This item is available as part of Virtual Commons, the open-access institutional repository of Bridgewater State University, Bridgewater, Massachusetts.

# Bridgewater State University

Maxwell Library  
Archives & Special Collections

**May Sarton Collection,  
1965 - 1997  
(MSS-005)**

*Finding Aid Compiled by  
Orson Kingsley*

Last Updated: October 24, 2016

**Volume:** 1.75 linear feet (5 document boxes)

**Acquisition:** Nearly all items in this manuscript group were donated to Bridgewater State University by Maureen Connelly in 2013; 2 items donated by Ann Coakley in 2014.

**Access:** Access to this record group is unrestricted.

**Copyright:** The researcher assumes full responsibility for conforming with the laws of copyright. Whenever possible, the Maxwell Library will provide information about copyright owners and other restrictions, but the legal determination ultimately rests with the researcher. Requests for permission to publish material from this collection should be discussed with the University Archivist.

### **May Sarton Collection Biographical Sketch**

May Sarton was a poet, novelist, and nonfiction writer. She was born in Belgium in 1912, but relocated with her parents to Cambridge, MA at an early age. She began her literary career with the publication of her first collection of poetry in 1937, and her first novel, *The Single Hound*, appeared the following year. Sarton was a prolific and diverse writer, having published nearly 20 collections of poetry, 20 novels, 13 works of nonfiction, and two children's books. As Sarton became an established writer her works began to gain recognition with the feminist's movement of the 1960s and 1970s. The publications of *Mrs. Stevens Hears the Mermaids Singing* in 1965 and *Journal of a Solitude* in 1973, along with other works, began being studied in university level women's studies courses during this time. Sarton was also a prolific writer of letters, and several books have been published focusing on her letters.

Sarton received awards and grants from the Poetry Society of America, the Guggenheim Foundation, the National Endowment for the Arts, and the Unitarian Universalist Women's Federation. In addition, she received the American Book Award and honorary doctorates from Bates College, Colby College, the University of New Hampshire, the University of Maine, Bowdoin College, Union College and Bucknell University among others. Sarton died on July 16, 1995 in York, Maine, where she had moved in 1973.

### **Scope and Content Note**

This collection represents material created through the friendship of the donor, Maureen Connelly, and May Sarton. Correspondence, photographs (all taken by Ms. Connelly unless noted otherwise), ephemera, and signed books and rare pamphlets published by Sarton make up the bulk of the collection.

Ms. Connelly and May Sarton shared a mutual friend, the poet and author Conrad Aiken. This combined with Ms. Connelly writing numerous reviews on Sarton's works caused for continual interaction and correspondence between the two women for quite a length of time, which is

represented by the correspondence in the collection. One set of photographs are of May Sarton at her house in York, Maine, which Ms. Connelly visited on multiple occasions.

This collection also has secondary resources to help make it a well-rounded research collection, including book reviews by the donor and by others, ephemera involving May Sarton and signed by her, and many of Sarton's published works nearly all inscribed.

## Box and Folder List

### Box 1

#### Folder

1. May Sarton to Maureen Connelly, 6 letters, June – October 1973
2. May Sarton to Maureen Connelly, 4 letters, November – December 1973
3. May Sarton to Maureen Connelly, 7 letters, January – April 1974
4. May Sarton to Maureen Connelly, 6 letters, May – December 1974
5. May Sarton to Maureen Connelly, 3 letters, 1975
6. May Sarton to Maureen Connelly, 3 letters, 1976
7. May Sarton to Maureen Connelly, 5 letters, 1977
8. May Sarton to Maureen Connelly, 3 letters, 1978
9. May Sarton to Maureen Connelly, 2 letters, 1980
10. May Sarton to Maureen Connelly, 1 letter, 1985
11. May Sarton to Maureen Connelly, 2 letters, undated
12. Correspondence of scholars and publishers to Maureen Connelly involving May Sarton, 1976 – 1993
13. Sarton typed and inscribed poem, *The Pandas*, October 1974
14. Sarton typed and signed poem, *Christmas*, 1974
15. Sarton signed poems on broadsides of *Blizzard* and *Christmas Light*, and a signed personal itinerary, 1986, undated
16. Four photographs of May Sarton, undated
17. Eight photographs of May Sarton and of her home in York, Maine, c. 1970s
18. May Sarton memorial service card, October 7, 1995
19. Reviews of Sarton's works by Maureen Connelly, 1970s
20. Reviews of Sarton's works, 1970s – 1980s
21. Postcard – May Sarton to Ann Coakley, undated
22. Postcard – Sarton estate to Maureen Connelly notifying of Sarton's death, 1995

## Books

### Box 2

Poetry and related writings mostly by May Sarton:

- A Grain of Mustard Seed: New Poems*, 1971
- Collected Poems: 1930-1973*, inscribed, 1974
- Halfway to Silence*, signed and inscribed (2 signatures), 1980
- A Winter Garland*, copy 97 of 150. Signed on back by author and artist. Signed and inscribed in front (3 Sarton signatures), 1982

- May Sarton: Woman and Poet*, edited by Constance Hunting, inscribed, 1982
- Letters from Maine*, signed and inscribed (2 signatures), 1984
- Letters to May*, by Eleanor Mabel Sarton and introduction by May Sarton, inscribed by May Sarton, 1986

### **Box 3**

Novels by May Sarton:

- *Mrs. Stevens Hears the Mermaids Singing*, inscribed in 1973, 1965
- *Kinds of Love*, inscribed in 1973 (includes a photograph stapled in the book), 1970
- *As We Are Now*, inscribed, 1973
- *Crucial Conversations*, inscribed and signed (2 signatures), 1975
- *A Reckoning*, 1981
- *The Single Hound*, 1991
- *The Poet and the Donkey*, 1996

### **Box 4**

Nonfiction by May Sarton:

- *Journal of a Solitude*, inscribed, 1973
- *A World of Light: Portraits and Celebrations*, inscribed, 1976
- *The House by the Sea: A Journal*, 1977
- *Recovering: A Journal*, signed and inscribed (2 signatures), 1980
- *Writings on Writing*, inscribed and signed (2 signatures), 1981
- *Honey in the Hive: Judith Matlack, 1898 – 1982*, 1988

### **Box 5**

Books about/involving May Sarton:

- *Selected Letters: 1916-1954*, 1997
- *May Sarton: A Biography*, by Margot Peters, 1997